1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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INTRODUCTION

● 121 OBJECTIVE study of contemporary social behavior has already begun, in recent years, to yield a new field of inquiry into human relations and human activity. Community studies, social surveys, industrial descriptions, and collections of folk culture and folk custom are beginning to put the investigation of modern Euro-American social life on a par with the ethnology of non-European peoples. The company of such reports is still very small, but it has a healthy growth. There is as yet no common name for them, and the scientific interest behind them has ranged very widely, from psychology to population study or economic history. Nevertheless, the basis for a comparative sociology, or social anthropology if you will, of all the world's peoples, both modern and "primitive," is gradually emerging. The present work is a small attempt to place rural southern Ireland on the roster. It submits a description of certain aspects of contemporary Irish "folk culture."

Ireland really has no need of people to represent her. Her writers, statesmen, and emigrants have carried her story far beyond the limits of the English-speaking world. The history of her agrarian movements and reforms and the renascence of her autonomy in political and cultural life have been amply documented. Yet the major social and economic conditions of her existence have been presented only through literary or political commentary and controversy. Consequently, an inquiry into sociological matters in the rural hinterland of the country, aiming at a description of the social matrix out of which her rich tradition springs, breaks new ground. The following report of inquiry into the several aspects of rural life in the south and west, carried on in a limited area by two foreigners,

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● 121 is offered to the Irish people as a merest beginning in a task they themselves are best equipped to carry on. The country that has taken a place once again among the free nations of the world deserves to be thoroughly known. It deserves to be put forward among students of human affairs as an example of human life and human achievement unique in respect to history and tradition but similar to others the world over in respect to human relations and organization.

Yet the book that follows studies only a very few of the many aspects of contemporary Irish social life. In the course of field work the problem of the influence of family structure and kinship early forced itself into the center of the stage. The form of the community and the lives of its members could not be understood apart from the kind of relations among persons bound by blood and marriage which the country people exhibited. That influence, therefore, became the principal area of investigation. For this reason this report upon field work is a descriptive account of the connection between several aspects of community life among the small farmers of County Clare, which was the region visited, and the system of ordering family relationships to be found among them.

Though the work deals with rural communities, the authors do not intend it to be in any sense a community study or social survey. Intensive observation brought the authors into intimate contact with three small communities, whose names will appear very often. But their field work was not directed toward discovering what was particular to these. It was aimed at a larger problem. It was based on an assumption fundamental to anthropological theory today. It assumed that the chief determinant factor in human society may well be human activity itself. The question behind the authors' inquiries was couched in terms of this hypothesis. What could they learn to help them to an explanation of the uniformities of human action by following

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the influence of one kind of activity of human culture upon another? Their results have thus always the same general form: men do these things because they do those others. The nature of the causality remains another question, but the connections observed must first be stated.

Consequently the book deals with indices, particularly statistical ones, describing all the Irish rural folk. It treats the Irish countrymen and countrywomen actually observed and interviewed as instances of a general condition to which such indices might refer. The instance illuminates the index; two knowns thus forecast the unknown generality. Whether the procedure is legitimate, the authors do not argue here; they merely make use of it. The three communities that appear from time to time in the following pages are thus samples, just as County Clare itself is a sample, a fairly representative mean among the major social and economic conditions in Ireland upon which there was documentation in the year 1932.

A good deal of the material presented here has been presented before, though rather differently. Several passages will be familiar to those who have read *The Irish Countryman* by one of the authors, Conrad M. Arensberg. Chapter X is in great part a reprint from that work. The authors are deeply indebted to the publishers, the Macmillan Company of London, for permission to include such materials here. They make the inclusion in order to put the behavior described in its perspective in relation to the other topics discussed here. Without it, the present story of mutual dependence and functional interconnection between kinds of activity among the small farmers of southern Ireland would be incomplete. For the theoretical problem that is involved in a discussion of the sociology of subsistence in rural Ireland is of far wider importance than any description of things Irish.

The nature of a social system and the nature of cause and

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● 121 effect in human affairs in social life becomes with each decade more and more important a problem for the increasingly self-conscious nations of the age. In its practical applications, the problem pushes beyond the confines of the sociological and anthropological inquiries which fostered it originally. Legislative changes, attempts at reform and planning, essays in propaganda and persuasion, campaigns for solidarity or defense, forecasts of development, all come to depend for practical success more and more upon a knowledge of how the complex social organism of a modern nation or culture will react. The Irish situation is thus merely an instance. It is an essay in the interconnectedness of the conditions of human social life. Whether one wishes to destroy, change, or preserve, the fact of interconnection exists and must be reckoned with.

As an academic problem, the form of the connection between the parts of the social organism, better stated as the effect of some events of human social life upon others, has been largely the concern of a few theoretical sociologists and a single school of anthropologists. The sociologists have dealt principally with its theoretical aspects, formulating abstract forecasts of the necessary connections. The anthropologists, of the "functional" school, have had to face the problem as a concrete requirement of description. Their tribes and native cultures have presented them with whole situations in which each part was foreign to them and in which each part had no other reference than the situation itself could give. Alert readers will detect the influence of both approaches in this book. Yet the emphasis throughout will be placed on the concrete necessities of description. The behavior of the Irish country people and the indices which report it are specific matters of observation and record. The internal connections they may have are equally specific matters.

Yet the authors do not wish to be thought in any sense

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experts on the Irish scene or to be motivated primarily by a desire to explain things Irish to the world. Much as they desire to understand and give proper value to the nation which so kindly and courteously received them, they do not feel themselves qualified in any way to characterize or evaluate the culture, tradition, or social life of the communities in which they made their study. Therefore, they present the results of their examination of the data they gathered in Ireland in answer to quite another set of problems. If they by chance and inadvertence happen to bring the light of a fresh foreign point of view into matters which are of much more than theoretical interest to Irishmen in the Free State, or to students of Ireland and her problems, they will count themselves lucky indeed.

The purpose of the study is not so much to characterize the communities described as it is to examine the behaviors of the persons living in them. The data upon which the argument of the book rests are the data of events, biographies, and situations in which the members of the communities took their parts. But the conclusions which advance the argument and which the authors draw from these data are not primarily intended as characterizations of the behavior involved. They are steps in the elaboration of a view of human behavior in social life to which they impel the authors and toward which it is hoped the reader will likewise find himself drawn.

That this should be the case involves the earliest history of the present research. It was begun in 1932 as an intensive field research in social anthropology as it had grown up in the ethnological work of Malinowski and through the theoretical formulations of Radcliffe-Brown. Neither of the authors of this book had done firsthand work among primitive peoples. They had served apprenticeships in field work under Professor William Lloyd Warner, then of Harvard University, in a study of a contemporary New England city

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121 and were thoroughly devoted to social anthropology as a technique for study of modern civilized communities.

121 Thus the conclusions of the book are in the nature of answers to the questions originally responsible for setting about the research. Experience in Yankee City in New England had led the authors to the point of view which is the central hypothesis of functional anthropology. The more they worked, the more it grew certain for them that to a certain approximation it is useful to regard society as an integrated system of mutually interrelated and functionally interdependent parts. A study in Ireland, then, should be a study to test this hypothesis. In a setting far different but still in some ways closely comparable to the American scene which the authors already knew, they would try to give it a greater precision.

The pooled experience of the authors, in so far as they themselves can judge it, did not involve a rigid insistence upon or acceptance of any one anthropological view within the broad confines of the functionalist approach. It also carried them far beyond the confines of anthropology, as the reader will soon learn.

For the most part the Irish communities the authors undertook to examine and in which they had a brief but enjoyable participation were, in a sense, laboratories and workshops. They exemplified concretely the problems contained in the concepts, social structure, social system, and organization of human behavior.

That is why, then, even though the authors found themselves becoming, as far as their halting steps would take them, economists, political scientists, folklorists, students of religion and whatnot, they found the general role of ethnologist and social anthropologist most congenial to their task. Even where their data, in part at least, necessitate the formulation of a general sociology, they are still confirmed in what is essentially the ethnologist's point of view. They

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seek to describe a culture, taking that word in its anthropological sense. And they seek to do so as observers of the minutiae of social life. 121

Naturally the culture so to be described need not have been that of Ireland, as far as the larger purpose of the study was concerned. But Ireland has many advantages for just such an inquiry, and in the authors' view, well warranted choice as a scene of operations.

In the first place, Ireland presented a distinctive and characteristic variant of western European civilization and a long, relatively unbroken tradition dating back to pre-Christian and pre-Roman times. Yet this distinctiveness is comprised within what is, after all, a small compass. Ireland is by no means a large country, and, however its people may be conscious of their own internal differences, it is very homogeneous indeed. Any acquaintance with Ireland at all soon establishes the fact that, far from being on the retreat, the distinctive culture of Ireland is increasing in strength and autonomy, however much it has learned to assimilate the technological and other developments of the modern age.

Nor is the anthropologist abashed by the arguments of those who deny any autonomy to national and ethnic cultures because, after all, they are part and parcel of a larger whole — that of the general occidental civilization. For all classifications of this sort are relative, and need be accepted only for the purpose one wishes to put them to. Just as one can speak of Iroquois culture in contradistinction to Algonquin, though both are eastern woodland American Indians, so one can speak of English and Irish cultures or national groups. The two are distinguishable by differences of behavior and outlook and products of quite different ways of life, even though in many aspects they are comparable and similarly derived historically.

Thus in many cases the data will be distinctly Irish and

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● |2| the conclusions may seem to some readers applicable only to Irish conditions. This will be the case particularly where the data meet that reader's disapproval, we are afraid, if he is not an Irishman, or win his enthusiastic support, if he is. Against that sort of interpretation the authors must protect themselves as best they can. Only the development of further studies of similar nature and the growth of understanding of what mechanisms are universal and what are particular in social structure will resolve such controversy.

But the reader must remember that, even though the book draws upon details of the most minute and personal kind, taken out of the most distinctively Irish situations, the use they are put to is not characterizing or descriptive. The authors use the observation of personal relations, individual and group activities, expressions of sentiment and emotion of every kind, as expository matter in the presentation of the general process by which individuals are united, groups are formed, joined, opposed, and in which the cohesion of the community is created, maintained, defended, and lost.

What is here attempted, then, is a work of inductive social analysis. Perhaps the adjectives "analytic" and "interpretive" describe the purpose of the authors best. Detail, local color, dramatic incident, and specific quotation are offered not for themselves, or for the picture they make, but in answer to questions of how and why human beings come to act upon one another in certain ways, to govern their lives in particular fashions, and to accept sentiments and beliefs of the kinds recorded.

The book works toward the problem of the individual as well, particularly so because its data are individual acts, events, expressions of opinion and attitude. For the problem of how science is to deal with individual life and individual behavior is inseparable, as we shall see, from the inquiry here pursued. The authors certainly do not intend any study of Irish psychology *per se*, or attempt psychoanalysis

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of the Irish mind. Rather they work toward the view of the problem of the individual in society which their inductions force upon them. In fact, it is another reason for the authors' adherence to anthropological method and anthropological outlook that the study confirms them in an original view. That is that there is no sociology which is not equally a psychology, nor any psychology which is not equally a sociology. In one aspect, the book will be a treatise on the necessity for abandoning distinctions between the fields and an attempt to force the realization of this identity. 12/●

If there is any single conclusion to which the authors wish to point with greatest emphasis, it is this: that social life and society must be understood not in terms of any hypostatization either of *the individual* or of *society*. There is no such thing as *the* society or *the* individual. Both concepts are conclusions of relative and limited validity. There are only persons behaving in various ways.

But this view is not the purpose of the book. It is the conclusion to which the authors were led in pursuance of their purpose. Nevertheless, it bears statement here at the outset, because it is so simple. Yet the whole course of the book is necessary to establish it and to show it to be the base upon which objective and inductive social science, still only a distant goal, can be built.

The final purpose of the book is to reach this base. It is an attempt to clear away in a concrete case the manifold complexities of civilized society to a point where an inductive science founded upon simple and measurable data can be begun. Its final purpose is also its conclusion: an objective social science can only be made by developing an impersonal technique for reducing to order the only social data we have which are comparable to those from which the natural sciences developed. These are the data of the interaction of human beings, to be found in what they do to one another.

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

NOTES ON THE IRISH HOUSE

BY ÅKE CAMPBELL, UPPSALA

121 In the discussions on the complicated problems of the European house traditions, the peasant Irish house has hitherto been almost ignored, in spite of the fact that the Irish house could certainly yield some important information. Ireland constitutes a reservoir of Celtic and other traditions of great antiquity and of special importance for the moulding of European folk-culture.[1]

To study the Irish peasant house, it is first of all necessary to make detailed field surveys for all parts of Ireland and then to compare these with the results of similar investigations in all related countries. But not less important is it to consider these conclusions in the light of the information we get in the Ancient Irish Laws (the culture here described dates from pagan times i. e. prior to the middle of the 5th century A. D.) the literature (particularly the Heroic tales of the Ulster cycle), and the vocabulary of the older language as well as that of the modern Irish dialects.

128 Postponing for further discussion (in part II of this article) the buildings of very archaic constructions, viz. the stone beehive huts or rectangular huts roofed by a system of overlapping stones and the most primitive or simplified house types (huts of wickerwork, sod, turf), I will here firstly consider Irish houses, stone-built and mudhouses with roof resting on wooden couples. These houses represent a slightly more developed stage of construction than the above mentioned types. They are all inhabited in modern times.[2]

341 It is a remarkable fact that even the most primitive Irish houses still inhabited — houses with only one room showing traces of its original task to shelter both the human family and the cattle, walls built without mortar, fireplace without any chimney etc. — are already divided into two principal types, namely (1) the house with the fire-place placed somewhere near the centre of the house or at least not just at the gablewall, so there are bedplaces behind the fire-place in the upper end of the house, often thatched gables, and (2) the house with stone-built gables and the fireplace close to the gable wall. In a former article (Béaloideas 1935 p. 57 et sq.) I have

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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[171]

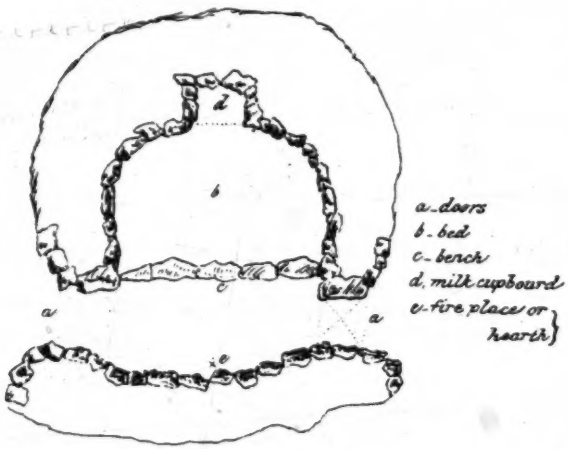

Fig. 3. Both, on West side of Loch an ath Ruadh. Uig, Lewis. From Thomas.

joined together in this manner (pl. 32, an interior showing roof formation. Camera was placed on the ground pointing upwards).

Primitive dwellings and hypogea of the Scottish isles also show the same arrangements. Thus it seems to be evident that the study of the oblong houses there (black-houses, *tigh dubh)* cannot be separated from the study of the *clochán* type. In consequence, it also will be necessary to compare the so-called Norse building customs in the Scottish Isles, which have been put forward by Aage Roussell,[12] not only with Thomas's black-house material — as Roussell does — but also with Thomas's other material including the stone-roofed houses.

[12]

Stone built timber-roofed oval houses.

If my working hypothesis holds, a thorough study of the oval houses will throw much light on Irish building traditions. At least in some parts of Ireland the oval houses formed the basis for the development of native houses of today, *e. g.* the one-roomed central-chimney houses with thatched gables.

It is evident that oval house-types can easily have been reached in places where the round or oval clochán as well as the hut with thatched roof resting on timber are known. When suitable large slabs were scarce, the primi-

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

STATURE, HEAD FORM, AND PIGMENTATION OF ADULT MALE IRISH

EARNEST A. HOOTON
Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

(Based upon data collected by C. Wesley Dupertuis)

FOUR FIGURES

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114 In 1931 the Division of Anthropology of Harvard University began an anthropological survey of Ireland. The project included three fields of investigation: archaeology, social anthropology, and physical anthropology. The field work in archaeology consisted of five summers of excavation which investigated Irish culture from the earliest Stone Age through the first millenium of the Christian era. County Clare was selected as a suitable area for intensive social anthropological work. Studies were carried on there by three investigators for an aggregate of more than 3 years. The study of the physical anthropology of the present adult male population of Ireland was conducted by C. W. Dupertuis over a period of 2 years ('34-'36). It has yielded a series of more than 8800 complete anthropometric and anthroposcopic records, which we believe to represent adequate samples of every part of the Irish population in every area with the exception of the large urban centers. Dr. Helen Dawson of the University of Iowa, working under a National Research Council Fellowship in Anthropology, spent 1 year in collecting data upon the physical anthropology of Irish women and secured some 2000 records. Her material is confined, for the most part, to western Ireland. To Dr. W. W. Howells of the American Museum of Natural History we entrusted the task of studying a large

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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skeletal series of medieval and modern age, which was temporarily disinterred in connection with the excavation of the ruined priory at Gallen, County Offaly.

Many technical papers and monographs upon the archaeological results of the survey have been published in the proceedings and memoirs of the learned societies of Ireland. Some preliminary lectures upon the social anthropology of the rural districts of County Clare have been issued in book form (Arensberg, '37). No general works correlating the results of the different phases of the survey have been published as yet, since these must await the completion of the detailed technical reports. Nothing at all has been brought out on the physical anthropological side, with the exception of a short preview of the data included in Dr. Carleton S. Coon's recent book, "The Races of Europe" ('39, pp. 376–384), although Dr. Howells' monograph on the Gallen skeletons is in the hands of the printer.

The enormous mass of anthropometric data collected by Mr. Dupertuis and by Dr. Dawson has been statistically reduced. At least 2 years more must elapse before it can be published. It is hoped to bring it out in one very large volume under the joint authorship of the present writer and the two anthropologists who gathered the material. The discussion of stature, head form, and pigmentation hereinafter presented must be regarded as a preview. Interpretation of the data cannot be other than tentative until the entire body of anthropological evidence has been thoroughly studied.

ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIAL BY LOCAL SUBGROUPS

In the tables and maps included in this paper the anthropological material is divided into nineteen local subgroups. These are single county groups, combinations of adjacent counties, or combinations of part of one county with other counties in whole or in part, or subdivisions of a single county. For 2 years Mr. Dupertuis drove up and down through the whole of Ireland studying the population and the geography of the country. The subgroups were made by him partly upon

5: Ó Danachair I-5 (no date) 1956 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Irish Farmyard Types

CAOIMHIN Ó DANACHAIR

DUBLIN

121 The fundamental need of shelter from the elements and protection during the hours of darkness is doubled for the farmer, who must provide shelter and protection for his livestock, his gear and his harvested crops as well as for himself and his family; the type of shelter which he provides is influenced not only by his traditional methods of using building materials but also by the type of husbandry in which he engages, the local conditions of soil and climate, and his own social and economic position in the community.

132 The climate of Ireland is mild and moist. The average January temperatures range from 40° to 251 44° F. over the whole country, while those of July range from 57° to 60°, and the average annual 231 rainfall over five-sixths of the country is from 30 to 50 inches, with from 175 to 250 days on which some rain falls. Heavy snow, great cold or long continued frosts are very exceptional, as are long droughts or great heat. In such a mild climate hay and unthreshed corn may be stored outdoors in ricks or stacks, and this was the usual method of storage in Ireland until quite recently; it still is the usual method on many farms. Other crops, such as potatoes and roots, and even grain and apples were, in many parts of Ireland, stored outdoors in suitable pits or containers; this, too, is still often done in the case of potatoes. Consequently storage space for the harvested crops was not the most urgent of the farmer's building needs. Again, the mildness of the climate permits the keeping in the open throughout the year of certain kinds of livestock, such as sheep and dry cattle, while on the other hand milking cows must be kept indoors during the winter and early spring. Thus it may be said that, in general, the size and form of an Irish farmyard depends upon the number of milking cows kept by the farmer.

234 Although, in Ireland, the raising of crops, especially of grain crops, was neither small in volume or unimportant in rural economy, it was in most times and places secondary to cattlebreeding, stock-raising and dairying. The evidence of archaeology and history reveals the importance of cattle from a very early date down to our own time; even yet, in many parts of the country a man's wealth is reckoned not by the size of his farm but by the number of his cattle, and the area of a farm is commonly reckoned by the number of cattle which it will support—"the grass of ten cows" is still a familiar term.

311 Farms are generally classified as small, medium or large, according to their area. A farm of less
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6: Ó Súilleabháin B-4, 5 (no date) 1956 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Two Death Customs in Ireland

SEÁN Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN

DUBLIN

121 In this article, I wish to draw the attention of students of the cult of the dead to two customs associated with it which have been observed for many generations in the southwest of Ireland. So far as I know, neither of them has hitherto been described in detail in any scientific journal or other work.

1. Funeral Boundaries

764 The importance of *an teampoll dúchais*, the traditional family burial-ground, is shown by the many customs and superstitions relating to it which are still fairly common in rural communities in Ireland. How often have we heard or read of a strange funeral seen at night, which was composed of deceased relatives of some recently dead person who had died and had been buried far from his family graveyard; the dead concourse was taking the body home (often even across the Atlantic) to find rest with his deceased kith and kin? Or, of a decapitated or maimed corpse which had been buried in the proper graveyard; the missing head or other member, however, was carefully carried by a "dead funeral" at night and laid in the same grave as the body? Thus, every effort within reason was made to bury the dead in the family burial-ground. This might have been due either to (a) respect for the dead, (b) fear of evil results, if the duty was ignored, (c) the wish of the dying person to be buried with his ancestors, or (d) any of a long list of other reasons which might be adduced. Even within a far-flung parish, the distance which the corpse had to be carried might amount to twenty miles. The distance would naturally be greater when the person had died in a remote district or county. Thus, funerals often took days in such cases, and halts had to be made overnight. The hardship endured by the coffin-bearers, who in olden times [482] almost always carried the coffin on their shoulders, may well be imagined.

In Ireland, as in most European countries, in the days when coffins were borne on men's shoulders, and even still in certain parts of Ireland, certain resting-places for funerals were traditionally appointed along the route. These were often at crossroads, at ancient market-crosses, which may have been associated with boundaries, or at boundaries between lands, parishes, or counties. In olden times, the corpse was not allowed to touch the earth at these resting-places; the toes of the

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

STUDIES OF IRISH RURAL SETTLEMENT

JAMES H. JOHNSON

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UNTIL recently it was generally thought that isolated farms, dispersed over the cultivated land (Fig. 1), formed a settlement pattern of great antiquity in Ireland. Without investigating the matter deeply, academic geographers explained this pattern in several ways. Some saw it as a product of the pastoral emphasis of Irish agriculture, which necessitated a close relationship between a farmer's residence and his fields.[1] Others, especially Meitzen, regarded the dispersed farms as a direct result of the Celtic heritage of the country.[2] And although professional geographers preferred a cultural explanation, school textbooks tended to seize on an environmental factor, seeing dispersed settlement as a product of the moist Irish climate, which required no concentration on wet-point sites and presumably allowed the cultural factors free play.[3]

Contemporary Studies

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Work by modern geographers on the critical study of Irish rural settlement began in County Donegal. Here E. E. Evans[4] showed that, in parts of the county at least, the single isolated farm is a relatively recent form of settlement, which dates from the nineteenth century rather than survives from any great antiquity. Modern dispersed settlement in Donegal was in fact preceded by "clachans"—clusters of farm dwellings and their associated outbuildings, usually grouped without any formal plan and in the early nineteenth century often consisting of as many as 30–40 houses. Although these clachans normally lacked both inn and church, communal life and the exchange of services were characteristic, and as a rule their inhabitants were related by blood.

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[113] [1] A. Demangeon: La géographie de l'habitat rural (International Geographical Congress, London and Cambridge, 1928: Report of the Commission on Types of Rural Settlement, pp. 41–80), p. 59.

[2] August Meitzen: Siedelung und Agrarwesen der Westgermanen und Ostgermanen, der Kelten, Römer, Finnen und Slawen (3 vols. and atlas, Berlin, 1895), Vol. 1, pp. 174–182.

[312] [3] The advantage of universal water supplies in Ireland is more apparent than real. In parts of County Fermanagh, for example, farmers must carry drinking water hundreds of yards to their dispersed farms (cf. J. M. Mogey: Rural Life in Northern Ireland [Oxford, 1947], pp. 35–36), when nucleation around the most satisfactory supply would seem to be a logical arrangement. Personal observation suggests that this is a not uncommon situation on many Irish farms.

[113] [4] Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System, *Geography*, Vol. 24, 1939, pp. 24–36; Donegal Survivals, *Antiquity*, Vol. 13, 1939, pp. 207–222.

➤ Mr. Johnson is Lecturer in Geography at University College, London.

[p.554]

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

survivals of the infield-outfield system in the remoter parts of Ireland would seem to suggest that it dates from a time much earlier than that of the Norman invasion.

Lines of Investigation

These questions and theories widen the field for speculation, but it is difficult to see where to turn for further information, largely because of the meager documentary evidence that survives in Ireland from periods earlier than the eighteenth century. Admittedly, relevant material may be discovered among estate papers, but there are three other lines that might be followed with profit.

One possible approach, field investigation, is illustrated by a project now under way, in which archeological techniques are being used to excavate a clachan in County Down, inhabited until the late nineteenth century. The primary aim is to discover how this particular clachan originated. Did it grow out of a single farm, and, if so, at what date? Two seasons' work has now been completed without conclusive answers to these questions, though some details have been added to the local economic history of County Down.[26] At least it has been shown that a clachan settlement stood on this site about 1780 and that the site had been occupied from sometime near the end of the fifteenth century, if not earlier. Buildings were found underlying the nineteenth-century structures. The fact that some of these remains appear to date from a time before the immigration of Scottish and English settlers into the area in the early seventeenth century should prove important in the study of Irish house types, since the lack of evidence on the development of settlement patterns extends also to the history of individual farm buildings.[27]

Whether this particular excavation will yield further information about

[26] J. H. Johnson, V. B. Proudfoot, and R. H. Buchanan: Excavations at Minerstown, Co. Down: Preliminary Report on Work Completed in 1956, *Ulster Journ. of Archæol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 21, 1958. (In press.)

[27] Pioneer work on surviving house types was carried out by A. Campbell (Irish Fields and Houses: A Study of Rural Culture, *Béaloideas*, Vol. 5, 1935, pp. 57–74; Notes on the Irish House, *Folkliv*, Vol. 1, 1937, pp. 207–234, and Vol. 2, 1938, pp. 173–196). This has been developed in a series of local studies, so that a comprehensive account of the surviving forms of Irish traditional building is becoming increasingly possible. The best and most recent general account is E. E. Evans' "Irish Folk Ways" (London, 1957; with an extensive bibliography), Chapters 4 and 5. Several important articles on house types and related topics have appeared recently; for example, C. Ó Danachair: Irish Farmyard Types, *Arctica: Studia Ethnographia Upsaliensis No. 11*, 1956, pp. 6–15; A. T. Lucas: Wattle and Straw-Mat Doors in Ireland, *ibid.*, pp. 16–35; C. Ó Danachair: Stand und Aufgaben der Hausforschung in Irland, *Bericht über die Arbeitstagung des Arbeitskreises für Deutsche Hausforschung*, Schleswig, 1955, pp. 29–50; R. H. Buchanan: Thatch and Thatching in North-East Ireland, *Gwerin*, Vol. 1, 1956–1957, pp. 123–142; and C. Ó Danachair: The Bed Out-Shot in Ireland, *Folkliv*, Vols. 19–20, 1955–1956, pp. 26–31.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

settlement patterns is somewhat doubtful. There is a reasonable chance of eventual discovery of the origin of settlement on this site, but from the beginning it was realized that only by good fortune would the relation of the clachan to other settlement forms, in particular the Irish raths, be uncovered. However, since relatively little of a substantive nature is known about Irish peasant life until as late as the end of the eighteenth century, any information on the material culture of the inhabitants of this site will be of value. There does not seem to be great hope of uncovering any field systems that may have surrounded the settlement, but similar work elsewhere might be more fortunate.

Place-name evidence provides a second, if somewhat tentative, line of investigation. For instance, J. B. Arthurs has suggested that *baile* (bally), the Gaelic word for home place or townland, may be of pre-Goidelic origin, and that where "ballys" are numerous, indigenous people had been left mainly undisturbed by the Goidelic expansion.[28] If this can be firmly established, it will immediately suggest a parallel with the possible dual system of landholding previously mentioned, particularly since the names of many surviving clachans contain the element "bally." Certainly there is need for further research on this topic.

Aerial photography offers a third line. Irish archeologists have long been aware of its importance[29] and have illustrated excavation reports with photographs taken from the air; but, except locally, this method has not yet been employed systematically in the study of Irish rural settlement. If suitable photographs were available, it is likely that they would illuminate the history of fields and farms in Ireland. At the least a detailed study of the available air photographs would guide further field work on the ground.

Disappearance of the Old System

Such methods of investigation can only hope to produce a few clues in what must be an exercise in detection; and, in a sense, it is some relief to find that the factors involved in the final disappearance of the infield-outfield system and its associated settlement pattern are somewhat clearer than the earlier history of these features. The regional details, however, still remain obscure, since the enclosure of the open fields in Ireland required no parlia-

[28] Quoted in Evans, Irish Folk Ways [see preceding footnote], p. 27.

[29] D. A. Chart: Air-Photography in Northern Ireland, *Antiquity*, Vol. 4. 1930, pp. 453–459; J. Raftery: Air-Photography and Archaeology, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74. 1944, pp. 119–123. Proudfoot (Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above]) used air photographs in his study of County Down, as did the government-sponsored archeological survey of the same county.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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609 It finds a formula for them that gives them a
123 familiar ring. So, the anthropologist gradually found acceptance. Even his formidable title grew easier as its translation spread. The Irish today
[212] are a very literate people. And a sudden increase in the circulation of books on anthropology
[217] from the county library helped very quickly to establish the anthropologist as 'looking for old customs'.

Once, perhaps, the translation would have been
121 adequate. But anthropology today is much more than a search for ancient custom. Even in Ireland, where the traditional Celtic life still lingers on, the anthropologist must conceive his purpose in broader terms. I want to devote this first lecture to the new purpose and its application to the Irish scene. In the remaining five lectures I shall try to present to you certain of the factors of custom and belief in the countryside of the south and west of Ireland and to analyse them in terms of the purpose we discuss here.

000 First of all we must clear up the matter of presumption. It may seem presumptuous that an anthropologist should profess to discuss the life of a modern nation. To some of us it may seem something like an engineer or a physicist, who deserts his field for metaphysics and morals. To others it may seem to betray a rather derogatory attitude toward the nation discussed. But neither desertion nor derogation can rightfully be charged. Our con-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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mentioned by name. It is the room reserved for themselves by the old people, the father and mother of the groom; they reserve it for their own use after they turn over the farm to their sons at marriage.

Ask about this and more information comes to you. It is into this room that the old couple move. The room is theirs. Younger members of the household dare not enter it except with permission. Indeed, it is the old couple who throw their aura around the room; the respect owed them is very like that felt toward the room they occupy. Here one enters a new field of behaviour and attitude in human relations. The honour and command of the old couple do not leave them altogether when they retire from active ownership of the farm. They enter a new status of which the associations round the west room are one reflexion.

So it goes, the new questions and new observations lead not to a prehistory or a chain of continuities, but to an ever-widening number of living associations which colour the relations of men and women, old and young. They lead to a realization of the laws and custom by which the small farmers find their lives ordered. In this instance, the west room of Luogh is a dim survival, perhaps, of Avalon and *Tír na nÓg*. But more certainly it is a focal point in a system of values some little of which we have begun to glimpse. Old custom in the west room thus gives

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

us the first example of our method. An inquiry into the present of rural life leads us into the ways of human behaviour rather than into those of cultural descent.

I called my second example 'the old man's curse'. It is perhaps not so pleasant an example and it springs out of infinitely rarer occasions. Yet it will serve as well as did the west room to show us where our queries must lie. The example of the old man's curse concerns a lost eye. Many of the country-people believed that the curse was directly responsible for the loss of a young man's eye. The young man in question lived in a district not far from Luogh; and the old man who cursed him was a neighbour. This is the baldest possible statement of the occurrence, and it would suffice if we were interested merely in collecting instances of magical injury.

For the baneful effects of curses, of black magic, of the 'evil eye', are a commonplace of anthropological literature. They are common enough too in Irish folklore. Men suffer injury in some way from supernatural causes. The possessor of the evil eye can blight, maim, and kill; the priest's curse, though in this case uttered only for cause, can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliever's head upon his shoulder; strike blindness; and the shrill imprecations of old men and women, or the *rann* of a satiric poet, can bring equal harm. Supernatural injuries of this sort are as

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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seemed to the Commissioners a petty commercial credit system.

They forgot, perhaps, that the landlord was removed from the identifications of sentiment and reciprocity which bound Irishman to Irishman and in which the ties between the countryside and the towns at last are formed. For a favour done is a favour received; and the debt is no more than the monetary sign of a social obligation. The 'confidence' its members have in the rural credit system is their trust in a social order.

What then can one say of that figure of Irish public life who has contributed so much to humour and story on the one hand, and to the bitterness and cynicism of his opponents on the other? I refer to the shopkeeper or publican in politics. His enemies have a stronger name for him; they call him a saloon-keeper and heap moral coals on his head. His friends, on the other hand, know him as a shrewd and genial soul.

The student of social behaviour and the types it produces cannot and must not join either the moralists or the sentimentalists. He must appraise only for the facts; knowledge is not an ethical judgment, it is the analysis of what is. Those who occupy a social place may be good or bad, brilliant or pitiful; only the place can interest the anthropologist.

This type, the shopkeeper-publican in politics, reached its zenith in Ireland in the years from 1898 to the Sinn Fein times. Only in recent years, since

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

tion is to mistake the issue. To enforce a political morality without emotional conviction would be false conversion indeed.

Thus, the shopkeeper-publican-politician was a very effective instrument, both for the countryside which used him and for himself. He might perhaps exact buying at his shop in return for the performance of his elective duties, as his enemies charge: but he also saw to it that those duties were performed for the very people who wished to see them done. Through him, as through no other possible channel, Ireland reached political maturity and effective national strength. That strength persists today, despite superficial strife and internal growth and change. And it persists by virtue of its connection with the society from which it springs.

For a social order, we can see clearly now, is a thing of very wide inclusions indeed. The same set of dispositions runs right through, from the 'west room' of remote Luogh to the political life of the market-towns and cities of Ireland. In this study, for instance, we began our examination of the countryman's way of life with a discussion of 'old custom'—folklore and folk-belief. By now it is clear to you, I think, that 'old custom' is more than a dying survival of an age-old habit. It is part of a larger whole, a whole which in its total is co-extensive with the total-pattern of the life of which old custom is still a part. Our two original ex-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

121 amples, the 'west room' and 'the old man's curse',
182 which came up in the first lecture, lead one on to an analysis of the countryman's way of life. In its turn, that way of life yields one clue at least to the understanding of a nation and its people.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

INTRODUCTION.

The cleavage between town and country has grown steadily sharper in Britain since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, and has recently been emphasised by the partial failure of evacuation schemes. As a result, closer attention is being given to the problems of the countryside, and, reflecting this interest, stories of Farmer Giles have given way to a flood of books recording the details of his daily and seasonal tools and tasks. 369

Outside the capital cities of Dublin and Belfast the cleavage between town and country has not gone very deep in Ireland; and even in Belfast business men and doctors are rarely more than a generation or two "off the land." In Eire 63% of the population is "rural dwelling," that is living outside "towns" with over 200 inhabitants. The corresponding figure for Britain would be well below 20%. Even in Northern Ireland, despite its great manufacturing industries, farming remains the most important industry, and 50% of the population lives in rural areas. Yet the younger people, at least, are often ignorant of the affairs of the countryside, and what is worse find no interest in them. I was recently approached in Co. Antrim by evacuated boys in their teens who wanted to know if a bunch of acorns they carried were hazel nuts!

This book does not pretend to be more than an introduction to a vast subject of inexhaustible interest, and I am fully conscious of the risks involved in venturing into an unexplored field and attempting to summarise its varied 121

[p. 1]

121 features: each of the following chapters could without difficulty be expanded into a book. The so-called Celtic fringe is in reality a broad mantle of fascinating pattern and colour. While I have tried to give summary accounts applying to Ireland as a whole, most of my material is drawn from Ulster, a province which, although six of its nine counties are politically separated from the rest of the island, is, archæologically at any rate, its most representative region and has its full share of country relics. When districts or counties are mentioned it must not be assumed that they are the only places where the practices or objects referred to occur. They happen to be examples which have come under my notice, and they are located not because they occur nowhere else, but because it is a scientific duty to record locations. I have not concentrated on the Gaeltacht in seeking survivals: I have rather been concerned to show how widespread are the customs and habits which are popularly supposed to be the peculiar possession of the Irish-speaking districts. Consequently I have not given Gaelic terms except in so far as they may be hidden in dialect words which I have, as a rule, spelt phonetically. They are for the most part the terms used in counties Antrim and Down. There are some obvious omissions in the topics discussed: I have deliberately said very little, for instance, about the homespun industry with all its varied gear and traditions, because it is fairly well known. Nor have I ventured into the controversial realms of religion or politics.

The Ireland I am writing about is one which is passing away, and some of the customs and tools described and illustrated in the following pages have almost entirely gone, but I have learnt that it is rarely safe to use the past tense in writing about Irish matters. I have more than once come across customs which were described as dead half a century ago: the old ways are an unconscionable time a-dying. When ancient arts and crafts become dissociated from the control of magical practices (*cf.* Chapters 18 and 19), decline often sets in. It is now realized that deterioration has been

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a powerful factor in the history of human culture, and that it needs spiritual as well as economic force to bring about new growth. But I am no supporter of those who, indulging in sentimental regrets for a Celtic twilight of doubtful authenticity, find in the past a Golden Age to which they would have us return. Our view should be forward. There is in Ireland, thanks to the astonishing virility of peasant tradition, a great opportunity to save and transform rural life, as happened in Denmark, before it has declined too far. In that revival education must play its part. A geographer may be forgiven for attributing the general ignorance about the foundations of rural culture to the very backward position of geography teaching in Ireland, where none of the Universities has given the subject full recognition—a state of affairs perhaps unparalleled in any part of Europe. Moreover, except for a few well-equipped and well-staffed schools, the standard of geography teaching in the schools is half a century behind the times.

Peasant ownership, for good or ill—it has not so far provided the answer to Ireland's problems—is now established. In Northern Ireland 38% of the farm holdings are under 15 acres in extent and only 4% exceed 100 acres: 27½% are between 15 and 30 acres (the corresponding figure in Eire is 27%). Cheap electricity may provide a basis for restoring rural industries as an essential and intimate part of the life of the countryside. The undoubted virtues of the Ulster character were surely related to the traditions of peasant weavers before that tradition was submerged in the Industrial Revolution. The essentials of the country craft—simplicity of form, soundness of construction and fitness to purpose—must somehow be restored. The traditional skill in wood working can be revived: re-afforestation should be undertaken on bold lines, and every effort made to save the native flora and fauna from further destruction. The difficulties of the present time are forcing on our attention the view expressed by many leading thinkers, that the rural tradition is of special importance for the maintenance of society, and that there are

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

XVII.

THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF INISHBOFIN AND INISHSHARK, COUNTY GALWAY.

By CHARLES R. BROWNE, B.A., M.D., M.R.I.A., of the Anthropological Laboratory, Trinity College, Dublin. (Plates VIII. and IX.)

[Read November 30, 1893.]

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I.—Introduction.

In pursuance of the plan adopted by the Dublin Anthropometric Committee of combining the ordinary work of the Laboratory with local investigation in selected parts of the country, and first tried last year in the Ethnographic Expedition to the Aran Islands, I, this autumn, made the second local inquiry, the field chosen being the islands of Inishbofin and Inishshark, Co. Galway.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

121 The inquiry was conducted on almost exactly the same lines as that of last year; the slight differences of method being either due to changes made as the result of former experience or to local causes; but every effort was made to ensure as great uniformity as possible, a matter of much importance as facilitating comparison of results.

In this report the same headings as used in the previous one, and arranged in the same order, have been adhered to as closely as possible, so as to allow of easy reference.

II.—Physiography of the Islands.

131 101 The two islands under consideration, together with several small uninhabited islets, form the parish of Inishbofin; they are situated outside the mouth of Killary Bay, and are distant some thirty-six miles from Westport, and about sixteen miles from Clifden, Co. Galway, the nearest town of any size. The post town is Cleggan, a small village on a point of the mainland, about seven miles from Inishbofin. Of the two main islands Inishbofin (locally called Bofin or Boffin) is much the larger, as out of the total area of the parish of 3151 acres, it contains 2312.

133 Its greatest length is about four miles, and it varies in breadth from half a mile to over two miles. The nature of its coast line is greatly varied; at some places, as at Knock-quarter or East End, being low and sandy; at others, as on the north side, and at Dun More on the western extremity, being rocky, at times rising into high and jagged cliffs worn into coves and natural bridges; while, again, in other places it is high bluff overhanging a shingly foreshore. The [504] harbour is very safe and well sheltered, and looks S.W. The coast of Shark, which lies about a mile S.W. of Inishbofin, is much more rocky, and may be said to be precipitous nearly all round, and much broken into by caves and deep fissures a few yards wide, with precipitous overhanging walls. It is difficult to land on this island if the weather be at all rough, and the inhabitants are often stormbound for weeks at a time. The difficulty and danger of landing is not so great [653] as it used to be since the building of a new pier by the Government as a relief work in 1892. Mr. Michael Lavelle, writing about the natives of this island, says:—"It is very hard for these people to live; they may be two months before they can go to Boffin to get some commands, and they live during that time on potatoes and 'white wine.'"

The principal rock of both islands is gneiss, but belts of steatite are also found.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishbofin

Inishshark has about twelve boats of from one to two tons. The natives of this island do not approve of the curragh, for which their coast is too rocky. 501

The ordinary rowing boat is manned by five men, the curragh by three.

The curragh is of the ordinary west coast type, consisting of a light wooden frame covered with tarred canvas.

VI.—FOLK-LORE.

Of this interesting branch of the subject, I regret to be able to give but little information, as the people are chary of talking upon such matters to strangers, and only a local collector working for a considerable time could be expected to gather much. Thanks, however, to the kindness of the Rev. Edward Lavelle, his brother Mr. Michael Lavelle, Mr. Myles Joyce, the schoolmaster of the island, as well as to several of the boatmen and others, I am enabled to give the following few notes on the subject. The legendary lore of these islands, especially Inishshark, has been very fully dealt with by Lady Wilde, to whose work I must refer the reader. These notes, however, are new. Omens and death-warnings, such as the banshee, the death-watch, and as mentioned previously (p. 352), the giving of wood out of a house to make a coffin foretelling the death of the giver, are fully believed in. 609 115 121 ●

Luck.—The sight of a red-haired woman or a cat, on starting out in the morning, will bring bad luck to the fishing; and it is stated that people have resorted to the expedient of getting a red-haired girl to lie in wait for a rival, and cross his path as he was starting. 777

To remove from one house to another is also looked upon as decidedly unlucky; but should a move become necessary, it is always made on Monday to the eastward, and on Tuesday to the westward, according to the Irish saying *Luan Soir, agus Mart Siar* (Monday, eastward, and Tuesday, westward). Should any addition be made to the dwelling it is always to the east, never to the west.

It is extremely unlucky to break a looking-glass; so also it is to mention a priest, or a fox, or a hare while fishing.

No man will buy a cow at the New Year without putting some of her milk into his boots, as otherwise she would certainly run dry.

People born on Whit Sunday are thought to be exceptionally ill-tempered.

The evil-eye, also, is strongly believed in; and if any one praises either a child or a beast belonging to a native without saying "God

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

XXXVII.

THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE MULLET, INISHKEA ISLANDS, AND PORTACLOY, COUNTY MAYO.

By CHARLES R. BROWNE M.D., M.R.I.A.

(Plates XV., XVI., and XVII.)

[Read February 25, 1895.]

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I.—Introduction.

In continuance of the series of local surveys undertaken by the Dublin Anthropometric Committee and carried out as part of the work of the Anthropological Laboratory of Trinity College, the third of these surveys was made by me last August in the western portion of the

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

121 barony of Erris, county Mayo. It was at first intended that only the Parish of Kilmore, including the peninsula known as the Mullet (or Erris proper) and the Inishkea Islands should be undertaken, but unusual facilities for working the isolated district of Portacloy presenting themselves, it also was included in the inquiry.

The circumstances under which the work was carried on differed considerably from those experienced on the two previous occasions, the field being wider and the people more scattered; but the same methods were adhered to as far as possible, and this report has been drawn up on the same lines as its predecessors, in order to facilitate comparison and reference.

II.—Physiography.

131 The district dealt with in this Paper consists of two distinct localities,
101 one clearly defined, the parish of Kilmore, the other more indefinite in
631 its boundaries, being a tract of wild mountainous country around the little hamlet of Portacloy; both form part of the barony of Erris, in the extreme north-west of the Co. Mayo.

133 Kilmore includes the Mullet peninsula, the inhabited islands of North and South Inishkea, Duvillaun and Eagle Island, and a considerable number of uninhabited islets, the most remarkable of which is Inisglora (Inis Gluaire). The Mullet, or Erris proper, is a long narrow strip of land, nearly cut off from the mainland, as it is bounded on the east or landward side by Broadhaven and the magnificent Bay of Blacksod, some forty-five square miles in area, the only connection with the rest of Erris being by a narrow isthmus, about 200 yards in width. The peninsula runs nearly north and south; its extreme length is about fifteen miles, and its width varies from about seven miles in the northern part to less than half a mile near its southern extremity. The total area of the parish, including the islands, is 29,492 acres, or about 46 square miles.

The coast line, in the northern portion, consists mainly of high cliffs, indented by deep coves with precipitous and often overhanging walls, and in places pierced by caves and natural bridges. This precipitous coast extends from Broadhaven, on the north-east, round to Annagh Head on the west, a distance, following the coast line, of about thirty miles, the cliffs rising in many places to above 300 feet, and affording only three inlets of any size. Blind Harbour, on the
[504] north (200 acres in area, nearly all dry at low water), and Frenchport and Scotchport on the west, the others are either inaccessible from the land side or only practicable for curraghs. Erris Head forms the

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p. 202(B)]

IRELAND'S decline in population has been made possible by the availability of work elsewhere for her people. This article deals with one of the poorest and most isolated districts of the country, an island off the west coast which, for over 60 years, has received government help in various forms, as well as money from relations in America and in Britain. And the island, Inishbofin, has a reasonably contented community not untypical of many in the west of Ireland, all of them Roman Catholic in religion and depending on the priest for the main leadership. Emigration continues, but those left behind and those who return to the island have a leisured way of

*The material for this paper was partly collected during a visit with the Geographical Society of Ireland in July, 1954. The author visited about half the houses on the island of Inishbofin, and for one-quarter of the 96 households recorded the numbers of the household, information on those who had emigrated, the area of the farm, number of stock, methods of selling produce, and other sources of income, such as fishing or work on the roads. Within this range the answers were generally reliable, but no direct financial inquiry would be fruitful and on Inishbofin the number of sheep was almost invariably understated as there are jealousies between households about the use of commonage (see p. 205). In one case a farmer told the writer that he had "half-a-dozen sheep or so" but the following morning he had 23 lined up in his field for the dealer to see. It was impossible to resist the comment over the garden wall, "A fine lot of sheep this morning."

Other aspects of Inishbofin are discussed in three articles in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 3, 1956, pp. 123–135, by J. P. Haughton, T. Jones Hughes, and J. A. K. Grahame.

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p. 202(c)]

●121 living rarely encountered in the modern world. As will be shown later, however, the island people maintain their simple but not uncomfortable way of living only by help from outside: if [433] one believes that every inhabited area must make its economic contribution to the state, Inishbofin is a debtor on a considerable scale.

"A small and dwindling population 167 maintain a precarious existence on the 657 Atlantic fringe of our industrial society and present upon the whole an aspect of decline and, in some parts, of dereliction." In these words the Scottish [659] crofting report[1] names a problem, common alike to the Atlantic fringe of Ireland and of Scotland, which was investigated by two Congested Districts Boards, in Ireland from 1891–1923[2] and in Scotland from 1897–1911[3]; in both countries the powers of these boards were transferred to the general administration of agricultural affairs. One by one the islands off the west coast of Ireland are being abandoned[4] but on Inishbofin this prospect does not seem immediate: past and present government assistance has resulted in a planned

[113] [1] Department of Agriculture for Scotland, Report of the Commission of enquiry into crofting conditions. H.M.S.O., Edinburgh, 1954, Cmd. 9091, para. 281, p. 87.

[2] For a general treatment, T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 23, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[3] Cmd. 9091, 1954, para. 265, p. 81.

[4] T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 120, 1954, p. 332.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PREFACE

The generous reception given to my *Irish Heritage*, published fifteen years ago, has encouraged me to go on collecting material on Irish folk life and to prepare this more comprehensive book on the subject. The earlier book was written, under difficult conditions, in the years 1939–41; it was an introductory study of an unexplored field, necessarily speculative and undocumented, and its main purpose was to arouse interest among Irish readers in the treasure-house of the past in which they live. It is hoped that IRISH FOLK WAYS will have a wider appeal. It is abundantly illustrated and fortified by references to a fairly full bibliography. Even so, parts of the text must be taken on trust, since some of the information was gathered from personal observation and conversations up and down Ireland. In the 'mountainy' corners of the country the past is ever-present, a ready topic of talk. I have checked the information where possible, for the inquirer must always be on guard against the countryman's facility of speech, his poetic licence and his fatal desire to please.

There is a great fascination in exploring the living past, but one cannot employ the strict methodology of the historical or natural sciences. The historian is handicapped in studying peasant peoples, not only because they leave no documents but also because their sense of time and values are not those of fully literate folk. The geographer, interested primarily in variations in space, makes an easier approach; yet he will miss much unless he has a concern for origins and a sense of the past. Without knowledge of the past he will not fully observe the present: it is the emotional shock which prints in the memory the first sight of some tool or custom which has survived from an earlier culture-layer. For the historian, on the other hand, the fact that it was described in the eighteenth century is more significant than that it occurs, unrecorded, in the twentieth.

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● 121 However interesting we may find 'bygones' for their own sake—and most of us take a natural interest in the way our forefathers lived—there is need to know not only how these relics were made and used but also what beliefs were held about them. Wherever possible I have studied the techniques of making and using tools as well as their lore, and by assisting in the processes have learnt more than books can teach. There is a clear relationship between the ways in which men's basic needs are satisfied and the social organization. Nothing less than the whole of the past is needed to explain the present, and in this difficult task we cannot afford to neglect the unrecorded past. The crafts of arable farming, of animal husbandry and the home industries have done more to shape our instincts and thoughts than the trampling of armies or the wranglings of kings which fill the documents from which history is written.

The outstanding interest of Ireland for the student of European origins lies in the fact that in its historic literature, language and social organization, as well as in its folklore and folk customs, it illustrates the marginal survival of archaic elements of the Indo-European world. Myles Dillon has shown how the three classes of ancient Irish society—the learned class, the warriors and the peasantry—are closely paralleled in the three main castes of Hinduism: Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya. The ethnographer may be led even farther afield in discovering a skin boat, a rush charm or a wheel-less cart that will take him on a scientific trail to the ends of the earth. And geologists and botanists find a similar interest in the peripheral survival in Ireland of rock-formations and floras which in their day dominated a wider scene.

178 121 The decades of demographic instability which culminated in the Great Famine of 1845–7 brought radical changes in the economy and landscape of rural Ireland. A correspondent in *The Times* of May 19th, 1853, noted that 'all accounts describe the country and its inhabitants as assuming more of the half-picturesque, half-comfortable aspect, of an English landscape', no doubt because hedges and an orderly husbandry had transformed the naked famine-stricken scene. The famine, as we shall see, was a great social watershed and it marked the end of an era that might well be termed prehistoric. But it is the

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changes which are taking place today, a hundred years later, that are finally extinguishing the prehistoric traditions. Mechanization and mass-production are invading the remotest glens, and things which were the commonplaces of fifty years ago are becoming as remote to the young as the Middle Ages. Knowledge of ways of life that have altered little for centuries is passing away; skills whose loss the practical countryman may have cause to regret are disappearing. The Irish Universities have a unique opportunity of fostering local studies and folklore-research, but only University College, Dublin, has seriously supported this work. The Government of Northern Ireland, however, is to be congratulated on having offered to help to finance an Ulster Folk Museum on the lines of St. Fagans in Wales and those of the Scandinavian countries.

Meanwhile the National Museum in Dublin, the Belfast Municipal Museum and the County Museum, Armagh, have been busy collecting and displaying the portable elements of material culture, and I have drawn freely on their exhibits for sketches of objects which it is now too late to find in everyday use. I wish to thank Mr. A. T. Lucas and Dr. J. Raftery, of the National Museum, Mr. W. A. Seaby of the Belfast Museum, and Mr. T. G. F. Paterson of Armagh for their assistance and encouragement. Among many other friends and colleagues whose help I cannot forget are Kevin Danaher and Sean O'Sullivan of the Irish Folklore Commission, Professor Michael Duignan, Professor M. J. O'Kelly, Professor Sean O'Riordain, H. G. Tempest, and Dr. A. E. J. Went; and among my former students R. H. Buchanan, Rosemary Harris, N. C. Mitchel, Dr. D. McCourt, Dr. J. M. Mogey, V. B. Proudfoot and G. B. Thompson. I have to thank the editors of the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* and of *Ulster Folklife* and Mr. W. A. Seaby for the loan of blocks, and Mr. Seaby also for permission to use several photographs from the collection of the late R. J. Welch. Mr. W. A. Green, Miss H. E. Henry, Mr. Frank Scovell and Mr. C. E. F. Trench have kindly supplied me with photographs. Miss Eileen Duncan has prepared the four maps, and other acknowledgements appear under the text-figures. It is a pleasure also to acknowledge the help received, either orally or in correspondence, from numerous Irishmen in all

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I

IRELAND THE OUTPOST

THE charm of Ireland, north as well as south, lies as much in the colourful speech and old-fashioned ways of her people as in the beauty of her green fields and blue hills, the silver-glint of lake waters and the gold of the scented whins. The observant visitor cannot fail to be attracted by customs and turns of speech, by traditions and tools which are obsolescent if not archaic in England. He will occasionally see in use in field and farmyard implements which went out of fashion so long ago in most parts of Great Britain that one may truly speak of them as medieval. Thus the toothed sickle, the flail, the one-eared spade, the clod-breaking mallet and seed-rake, the upright churn and the three-legged pot can all be closely matched in illustrations of English medieval rural life (Fig. 1). The boon-work which was an obligation owed by tenants to English landlords in the Middle Ages survives in the flax-pulling boons of Ulster, and the Anglo-Norman word for the lord's part of an estate, the demesne, is universally applied to the parklands of Ireland. The Irish baronies or kingdoms, as they are sometimes called, are similarly relics of the Middle Ages. The prevalence of the Roman Catholic religion, to which 76 per cent of the population of Ireland adheres—the figure is 94 per cent for the Republic of Ireland—reinforces this sense of the past; and the English dialects spoken in many districts, even if shot through with Gaelic-derived turns of phrase, are strikingly Elizabethan. A strong medieval flavour attaches to the feast-day gatherings and patterns, to strawboys, wrenboys and the Christmas mummers. Medieval too is the diversity of folk-customs and of locally-made tools, which will be found to vary from one

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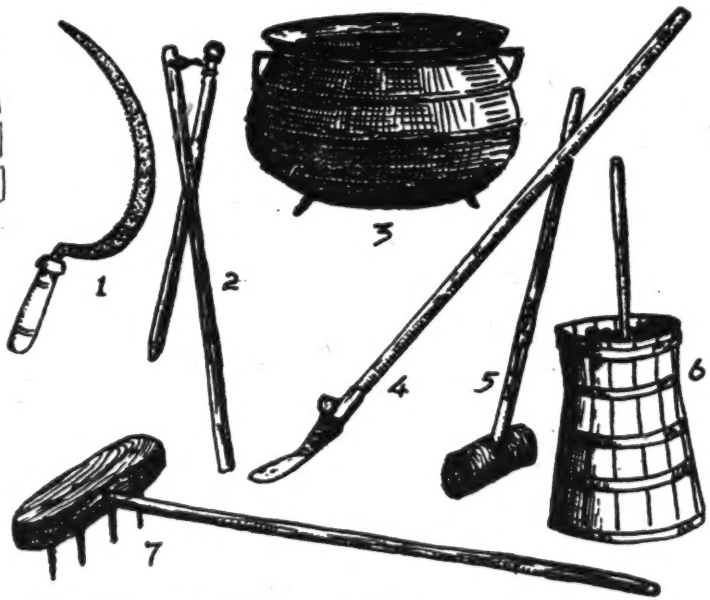

FIG. 1. 'The toothed sickle (1), the flail (2), the one-eared spade (4), the clod-breaking mallet (5), and seek-rake (7), the upright churn (6), and the three-legged pot (3), can all be closely matched in illustrations of English medieval rural life.'

district to another. The interest of these relics is enhanced when one discovers parallels among simple societies in distant parts of the world.

These ancient diversities are being ironed out at an increasing rate, and the opportunity of seeing and, what is more important, placing on record these age-old crafts and rites will soon pass. The wonder is that so many have persisted through the political, economic and social upheavals of the last 150 years. During that period the steady decline of the Gaelic language resulted in the loss of a great deal of information on local and regional life and of a vast store of oral literature, in which the lore of an ancient civilization was enshrined. The scientist must regard this loss as a tragedy comparable to that suffered by the historian in the disastrous burning of the Dublin Four Courts in

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1922. Ireland is one of the last homes of the oral traditions of prehistoric and medieval Europe, which mirror the routine of rural life through the seasons, the contacts of peoples in war and in commerce, and the heroic deeds of half-legendary leaders. Luckily all is not lost: the devoted labours of the Irish Folklore Commission have rescued from the Gaeltacht and catalogued with scientific skill countless stories of the kind which enriched the literature of the medieval world. In Northern Ireland also belated efforts are being made to gather the harvest of lore and legend.

The study of both the material and spiritual folk-life of Ireland and the oceanic fringes of Europe can throw light on the past and on the evolution of society in Britain and western Europe generally. English anthropologists and ethnographers have searched the farthest continents and enriched scientific literature with their findings, but they have neglected the little island across the Irish Sea. Irish scholars too, perhaps because they find it hard to detach themselves from what is familiar, have shown little interest until recently in the treasure-house of fact and fancy that lies about them. Some writers, indeed, appear to deplore the existence of the folk-customs I am describing in this book: they would conceal or even deny them. It has been learnedly argued, for instance, that the well-authenticated practice of 'ploughing by the tail'[1] was the lying invention of English propagandists, who passed an Act of Parliament prohibiting it, in 1635, merely to demonstrate how degraded the Irish must be! Those features of rural life which cannot be concealed or denied are regarded as due to the repressive hand of England, to penal laws, absenteeism and the poverty imposed by rack-rents and unscrupulous land-agents. Certainly there have been great abuses, and they have left the Irish suspicious and sensitive. It is unfortunate, therefore, that authoritative works recently published in England have needlessly exaggerated the tribal habits and pastoral nomadism of the ancient Irish. A writer in the *Cambridge Economic History*,[2] indeed, goes so far as to describe fifteenth-century Ireland as 'in great part, a

[1] *The Irish Book-lover* (May, 1943), 9.
[2] *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*. Eds. J. H. Clapham and E. Power, 1 (1941), 161.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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II

FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

THE tools and traits we are describing in this book have persisted through the centuries because of their close adaptation to the Irish environment, physical and social. They have gathered around them, in that environment, associations of usage and ritual without which they are meaningless, so that transplanted into another land they would be museum-pieces, as indeed they are rapidly becoming in many parts of Ireland. To understand them, therefore, we should consider them not in isolation but as part and parcel of a particular environment. To a large extent a culture owes its specific peculiarities to its geographical setting, and that is why our first chapters will be concerned with the face of the land and with the fields, farms and houses in which generations of Irish countryfolk have lived and worked.

It was from a forest environment that the cultural landscape slowly emerged. The destruction of the native forests was virtually complete by the seventeenth century. Thereafter constructional timber had to be imported, and the rural population turned to the fossil oak and pine of the bogs. In the eighteenth century landlords planted their lowland demesnes with exotic species of trees, but only in our own day, under government schemes of reafforestation, are the hill lands here and there being planted and abandoned fields being put back into forest. With the passing of the oak forests a wealth of woodcraft and tree lore perished and a wide range of skills declined, of which we get tantalizing glimpses from archaeological discoveries and legendary tales. Instead of the almost unbroken forest cover which once existed a 'closed association' of farms and fenced fields

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare.

(With Plate XI.[1]).

131 63| County Clare from the fourth century of our era was united politically with North Munster, Tuath Mumhain, or Thomond, though separated from it by the broad waters of the Shannon. Standing thus by itself, "isolated by the Sea, the River, and the enmity of Connaught," it might be expected that it would preserve until modern times an unbroken tradition from the prehistoric past, and that a survey of its folklore would show many traces of ancient beliefs still surviving. The battle goddess *Catabodva*, 776 worshipped in antique Gaul, appears as the *Bodbh* of battle 787 (*cath*) in the wars fought by the Princes of Clare in 1014 and 1317, and the spirit that washed the bloodstained clothes and limbs of the then living combatants still, I was told three years ago, foretells calamity by washing clothes in the same waters.[2] *Ptists* or water snakes,—emblems, perhaps, of pagan islanders or devouring seas and lakes,—abound in the legends of a very early date, and are still reputed to seize the cattle, and even human 121 beings, drowned in the lakes of Clare. The place names considered below will show to what an extent our present nomen- 124 clature records the mythology and sagas of early days, and I propose in the remainder of this first paper to deal with the banshee, the death coach, and the fairies. The bulk of the traditions

[1] This plate of the Ancient Parishes of County Clare has been kindly lent by the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, and appears in their *Proceedings*, S. III., vol. iv.

[2] Cf. the *lavandières de nuit*, discussed by Sébillot, *Le Folk-lore de France*, Tome iii.

[p 180]

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County Clare

since 1790 has been collected from the mouths of the people, and not from books nor from the notes of others, and I have tried, where possible, to gather various versions of the legends without the dangerous aid of "leading questions."

I. *Place Names and Legends of Places.*

Were we assured of the date of their origin, place names would be our most authentic, and perhaps our earliest, evidence of traditional beliefs and superstitions, but their first records only give a minimum date. To take a few examples:—if we may accept explanations earlier than A.D. 800, the name of Iniscatha, traceable from about 550, embodies the name of a monster, (probably the "god or demon of the flood"), dispossessed by St. Senan, the missionary of the Corcavaskin district.[3] Again, Craganeevul near Killaloe recalls the belief in Aibhill, or Aibhinn, "the beautiful," the tutelary spirit of the ruling house of the Dalcassians, the later O'Briens. If the "Life of St. Maccreiche" be early, it bears out a later belief that the cave of Poulnabruckee, in Inchiquin, commemorates no ordinary badger, but the formidable "demon-badger," killer of cattle and men.[4]

Following certain topographical lines I give the names as they occur, rather than as grouped according to beliefs. I must also premise that the Dalcassian tribes virtually covered the eastern Baronies of Bunratty and Tulla, with part of Inchiquin, from about A.D. 377; the Corca Modruad, (the royal line of the mythical Queen Maeve and Fergus mac Roigh), were in Burren and Corcomroe from still earlier times, beyond the range of even historical tradition[5]; while a third great independent line, the Corca-

[3] Colgan, "Vita S. Senani," *Acta S.S. Hib.* (March 8).

[4] This I suspect to have been really a belated bear, as that formidable beast, whose bones so abound in Clare caverns, perished at an unknown date, leaving his name "Mathgamhan," or Mahon, to his human enemies, and his remains as his only monument. Certain MacMahons, however, affected to believe that they were Normans originally named Fitz Urse, in the same way as the MacNamaras were supposed to be Mortimers (*de Mortuo Mari*) by Spenser and others in the time of Elizabeth.

[5] An account of a curious episode found in the legend of St. Mochulla, whose "Life" had been lost or taken from Ireland before 1637, has been preserved orally until recent years (see *Bunratty infra*, p. 184). The legends of the

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Foreword

About the Series

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These case studies in cultural anthropology are designed to bring to students, in beginning and intermediate courses in the social sciences, insights into the richness and complexity of human life as it is lived in different ways and in different places. They are written by men and women who have lived in the societies they write about and who are professionally trained as observers and interpreters of human behavior. The authors are also teachers, and in writing their books they have kept the students who will read them foremost in their minds. It is our belief that when an understanding of ways of life very different from one's own is gained, abstractions and generalizations about social structure, cultural values, subsistence techniques, and the other universal categories of human social behavior become meaningful.

About the Author

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John C. Messenger is a professor in the Department of Anthropology, the Folklore Institute, and the Program of African Studies at Indiana University. He received his Ph.D. from Northwestern University and taught at Michigan State University and Carleton College before joining the Indiana University [122] faculty. In 1951 and 1952, he conducted fieldwork among the Anang of southeastern Nigeria as an Area Research Training Fellow of the Social Science Research Council; his research during 1959 and 1960, which provided the bulk of the data reported herein, was supported by an Exchange Scholarship to Eire administered by An Bord Scolairteachtai Comalairte of Dublin. Professor Messenger has published numerous articles, chapters in books, and monographs concerning the cultures of the Anang, the Irish, and the Montserrat islanders of the West Indies, whom he studied in 1965 and 1967. A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled him to write a substantial portion of this volume.

About the Book

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This is a case study of a people widely known through the media of journalism and film. Imbedded in a context of romanticism and nativism, the image of the people and their culture created by these media scarcely approximates reality, for reasons that Dr. Messenger makes clear both in his discussion of nativism and the reasons for its strong influence on characterizations of Irish folk,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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and in his descriptive analysis of the culture and social structure of Inis Beag. For these reasons the book will doubtless raise controversy among Irish journalists, particularly those of nativistic persuasion.

Dr. Messenger describes the folk and their culture as he sees them, and within the conceptual structure of the social sciences. The picture that emerges is less heroic than the current romanticized idealization, and very human. The author's personal identification with the island and its people is obvious. He struggles to maintain an objective stance, and largely succeeds, but it is obvious that he and his wife participated exuberantly in the life of Inis Beag. This is in the best tradition of anthropological fieldwork. The problems of identification, friendship, rejection and acceptance, and ambivalence that are invariably associated with such participation are common to all of us who have had this kind of experience.

The case study is notable for its human qualities. It is a descriptive analysis of a significant folk way of life heretofore unrepresented in this series. It is also notable for its significance as an analysis of a closed community that provides mobility only by migration, and for the analysis of the influence of puritanism. This latter emphasis is particularly valuable, for too often we assume that puritanism is associated only with Protestantism. Here, the inter-relationships with Catholicism, particularly with the Jansenist denial of sexuality, is made very clear. Dr. Messenger pursues these themes at both the social and the psychological levels. The case study is also characterized by a strong focus, especially appropriate in the Irish folk context, on folklore, Christian reinterpretations of pagan elements, music, song, and dance. And the dimensions of life that are featured in most ethnographies are well developed—subsistence, material culture, social organization and social control, and values and religion. Dr. Messenger is also careful to provide a historical introduction to Inis Beag, in the context of relevant aspects of Irish history.

GEORGE AND LOUISE SPINDLER
General Editors

Portola Valley, Calif.
May 1969

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Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, [241] of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first [241] decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag [501] over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most [197] attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

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[1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

[2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

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visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process.

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated.

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next.

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the

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The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. In 1846, 25 years before Edward Tylor pronounced his famous anthropological definition of culture, William J. Thoms introduced into English the word "folk-lore," which he defined as "the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc., of the olden time." Ethnology, a scientific discipline whose focus is primitive culture in the Tylor tradition, has had for almost a century its parallel in the humanistic discipline of folklore, whose focus is the culture of the folk, or folklore, in the Thoms tradition. During this time, ethnology has evidenced a humanistic current in its concern with primitive religion, ideology, and esthetics. The discipline of folklore, on the other hand, has evidenced a scientific current, mainly in the research of scholars belonging to the "Finnish School," whose approach to cultural dynamics resembles that of the "American Historical School" of ethnology, and of eastern and northern European folklorists (who often call themselves ethnographers as well) who have been making rather broad cultural studies of peasant communities somewhat in the anthropological mold. American ethnologists employ the term folklore to designate only the oral literature of peoples—their myths, legends, folktales, anecdotes, proverbs, riddles, songs, and the like. I will employ the term in this sense when I deal with Inis Beag esthetics in Chapter 4.

Ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the universities and elsewhere in the Republic of Ireland, but folklore in the humanistic tradition is strongly developed (Delargy 1957; Dorson 1966). The deliberate recording of the immense body of folklore in Ireland began in the early part of the last century, was kindled by the Gaelic Revival, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation, first, of the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936. For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the oral literature and material traits, and their associated behavior, of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the people; moreover, their visits have been brief and intermittent, they have depended on a limited sample of respondents, and most of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (the Irish equivalent of the American *Outline of Cultural Materials* and British *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*), which does not include many categories of significance to anthropologists. Since my wife and I were interested primarily in the nonmaterial elements of Inis Beag culture, and since the oral literature of the folk has been well studied by commission and other folklorists, we placed less emphasis on material culture and folklore in our ethnographic work.

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The culture of Inis Beag about to be described is that of 1959 and 1960, and if I intrude data from earlier or later fieldwork I will label them as such. My wife and I also collected a large body of cultural materials in three other Irish islands, for the purposes of making cross-cultural comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. The Inis Beag tradition is shared in large measure by the inhabitants of neighboring islands, especially those of Inis Thiar, and the several cultures together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the Irish system considered as a whole. Many of the peasant customs of Inis Beag are shared with rural peoples on the mainland, where

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numerous regional subcultures exist, and some are part of a larger European matrix. In fact, as I indicated earlier, Inis Beag culture in its broadest outlines resembles other existing folk cultures. I have decided to employ English terms rather than their Gaelic counterparts whenever possible throughout the book, even though doing so will displease many Irish readers; this decision is based on the fact that most of its readers will be students of anthropology in colleges and universities in the United States. Since the islanders speak both English and Irish and command English equivalents for most Gaelic words and phrases, either language might be utilized.

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823 [121] which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several [653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Terrace and Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small 312 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells, 663 but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have 312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet [333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches [241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen 333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across [653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but [178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are

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many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim, but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or privately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quotations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements, handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather forecasters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu. Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

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829 passersby, and live more frugally and save more as a result. Gruff, impatient, and
often impolite, they talk rapidly in high pitched voices and shout at their beasts
[273] and at one another from a distance, and on occasion they will use profanity. Inis
Thiar men drink more than Inis Beag men, it is claimed; rather than sipping
slowly and savoring their stout and whiskey, they consume it quickly and are more
concerned with the effects that it produces. It is admitted in Inis Beag that all
Irish are inquisitive and disposed to gossip about their fellows, but islanders to
the west are openly so and will "demand" information from tourists and will
[593] discuss one another quite freely. Braver, "bolder," and less concerned with morality,
men from Inis Thiar rowed to the freighter on several occasions and contested
successfully with local folk for salvage, which caused some Inis Beag wives to
[562] deride their husbands for not possessing these qualities. Women of Inis Thiar also
are thought to be braver and bolder, and remain less in their homes, visit relatives
and acquaintances and the shops more often, and in general participate more in
social events than do their sisters to the east. Despite being extremely critical of
Inis Thiar folk for possessing the above and many other less prominent traits, the
people of Inis Beag grudgingly admit that their neighbors possess greater *esprit*
[167] *de corps* and enjoy life more than themselves. Once a person emigrates from Inis
Beag, he or she seldom returns; but Inis Thiar emigrants are "clever" and do well
abroad, and often return with earnings to remain at home, especially women who
come back with "fortunes" to seek husbands.

829 The attitudes of islanders toward those living on the mainland—"towns-
186 people" or "city folk"—reveal a primitivistic bias which probably can be traced
• [121] back to the Viking occupation, when towns first were established in Ireland and
primitive Celts became transformed into peasants: "that primitive people retain
a morality which civilized people tend to lose; that a man's moral worth declines
in rough proportion to his distance from the soil; that civilization must be held
accountable for man's noteworthy catalogue of vices;" (Ardrey 1961:147–148).
Inis Beag folk regard themselves as impeccably moral and mainlanders, although
fellow Catholics, as immoral; yet the "progressiveness" of the latter is envied
secretly and gives rise to the sensitivity of islanders to the real and imagined
denigration of them by mainlanders for their backwardness. Mainland Irish are
[291] thought to be overly pecuniary, dishonest, rude, and promiscuous. When visiting
towns and cities on the mainland, Inis Beag people for many years have worn main-
land attire so as not to be singled out and ridiculed. They are ashamed of their
English speech—even though adults speak the tongue with greater proficiency
than many urban dwellers—and believe that they are prey to dishonest shopkeepers,
[123] who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance and naiveté. Whenever
my wife and I paid short visits to a nearby port or to Dublin, we were requested by
islanders to make purchases, have repairs made under our name, and transact other
business for them because we were "too clever to be cheated." Once in the city, the
folk miss Inis Beag with its clear air and broad expanses, and they complain of
the tall buildings (seldom more than four stories high) which "press in" on them,
the bustle of the main street, the curious stares of townspeople, and the dirtiness
of buildings and roads. In claiming that few islanders would prefer to live there

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harmony, but other biases are at work (Messenger 1968:29–30). Writers of strong religious bent have exaggerated the Catholic moral virtues embodied in the Irish family and community and have disregarded disputes because they involve unchristian behavior, while social scientists with a functional theoretical orientation have emphasized the integration of social groups and have neglected disputes because they betray dysfunction. Those observers who have depended almost entirely on the guided interview to obtain data concerning family and community often have remained oblivious to disputes. Some researchers, however, have collected information on disputes in an objective manner, but have been unwilling to publish it for fear of antagonizing the folk, the church, and the government—thus losing their positions or jeopardizing research in the future. The most valuable study to date on disputes in Ireland is that of Elliott Leyton, which is based on research that he conducted between 1964 and 1966 in Aughnaboy (like Inis Beag, a fictitious name), a village in Co. Down with three times the population of Inis Beag.

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Using Claude Lévi-Strauss' distinction between conscious and unconscious models, Leyton first examines the conscious models—explanatory constructs, or norms, of the people themselves—held by Aughnaboy villagers concerning disputes, then the types of disputes which in fact do occur within the community —from which the unconscious models are inferred by the analyst. Three conscious models held by the villagers are of pertinence to us: those for personal conduct, relations between kinsmen, and relations between non-kin (Leyton 1966:535–536). The first is summarized in the concept of "decency."

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> To be a "decent" man is to carry out one's obligations to society in a style characterized by cheerfulness and friendliness, to pause willingly for a chat and, most importantly, to refrain—regardless of the provocation—from any display of overt hostility. . . . greatest esteem is reserved for those who succeed in maintaining cordial relations with everyone in the village; and the greatest contempt is reserved for those quarrelsome individuals who are frequently involved in disputes.

Relations between kinsmen, Leyton says,

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> . . . are characterized, ideally, by the highest degree of friendliness and harmony. The individual is expected to feel the strongest affection for his kinsmen, and to subordinate all other loyalties . . . to the demands of his kinsmen. . . . individuals are expected to suppress their personal desires and ideals if they conflict with the unity of the group. . . . Close affective ties and regular visiting rarely occur outside the field of kinship. Non-kin are regarded with suspicion and distrust, and the interests of non-kin are seen as being in potential opposition to the interests of one's own kin.

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Ideally, friendliness and harmony characterize relations between non-kin as well in Aughnaboy.

> Non-kin are in general expected to behave according to the standards of "decency" . . . to be cheerful and talkative and to avoid quarrels. . . . Aughnaboy inhabitants conceive relations between non-kin to be a system in equilibrium . . . relations

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121 578 609 between the separate groups of kin in the village are seen to be in delicate balance of power which is expressed in the local phrase, "you can't fight anybody around here because all their people will gang up on you." If an individual's kinsmen must defend him in his personal disputes, it necessarily follows that a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin.

114 By and large, these three conscious models apply to Inis Beag as well as Aughnaboy.

121 578 Leyton discovers broad "disparities between the conscious models and the statistical patterns formed by the actual behaviour" of people in Aughnaboy, manifested in 74 disputes covering a time span of ten years in the memories of his respondents. He classifies these disputes according to three criteria: their severity, the issues provoking them, and the categories of individuals involved (Leyton 1966:537–539). The criterion of severity yields three types of disputes: argument —"characterized by frequent or continuous arguments . . . associated primarily with exchange of verbal abuse;" withdrawal—where "social relations are actually severed and cooperation is withdrawn;" and interference—in which active attempts are made to "interfere with the welfare of the opposing party. These attempts, which may be secret or open, include legal suits, reports to the police, theft and, rarely, physical violence, as well as withdrawal of all cooperation." Three types of disputes also are distinguishable when issues provoking hostility are examined: economic—"which includes conflict such as rivalry between shopkeepers and disputed inheritance;" personality clashes—"which includes disputes primarily attributed to the innately quarrelsome personalities of certain individuals;" and jealousy—"which refers primarily to situations in which an individual's affections are alienated." The categories of persons involved in disputes are agnatic kin, uterine kin, affinal kin, and non-kin. Leyton establishes rank orders for each of his type classifications, and finds that the rank order for the severity classification is withdrawal, interference, and argument; for the issues classification, it is personality clashes, jealousy, and economic; and for the individuals involved classification, it is affinal kin, agnatic kin, non-kin, and uterine kin.

121 578 [521] [683] [151] In applying Leyton's unconscious models of disputes to Inis Beag, I have modified slightly his severity and issues classifications. To the former, I have added a fourth type which I call gossip; this is not gossip of the ordinary variety so common on the island, but rather continuous, pernicious verbal attacks made by a person within earshot of his victim's relatives and close friends, which usually do not lead to argument. In the case of the issues classification, I have broadened the range of personality clashes. There are several "innately quarrelsome" individuals in Inis Beag, but most personality conflicts involve persons other than these, who have come to dislike one another intensely for numerous reasons, most of which are related to envy, jealousy (other than alienation of affections), resentment against authority, and hostility toward members of the opposite sex. Over 200 disputes have occurred on the island within the past generation, excluding those involving semi-permanent dwellers—curates, lighthouse keepers, and the Dane.

578 121 The higher incidence of disputes in Inis Beag is attributable, for the most part, to the longer time span appraised and the addition of gossip to the severity classification in my analysis. However, the rank orders of the three type classifications

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closely approximate those for Aughnaboy; only the severity classification in Inis Beag differs, with gossip most prevalent followed by withdrawal, argument, and interference.

A further step in Leyton's analysis is his examination of the severity of disputes and the issues provoking them with relation to the four categories of persons involved. Jealousy and personality clashes, in that order, are the causes of disputes between affinal kin in Aughnaboy, which give rise to withdrawal and argument. In the case of agnatic kin, the causes are personality clashes and economic conflict, and withdrawal and argument are the sole responses; the same causes apply to disputes between non-kin, but interference rather than withdrawal is by far the most conspicuous response. Disputes between uterine kin are negligible. These rank orders are in accord with those of Inis Beag except for the predominance of interference in disputes between non-kin; on the island, gossip and withdrawal outweigh interference. The major disputes in Inis Beag are: between spouses and between mothers and daughters-in-law among affinal kin; between fathers and sons, between brothers, and between brothers and sisters among agnatic kin; and between families, between shopkeepers, and between particular individuals who are distantly or not related. Since disputes between agnatic, uterine, and affinal kin have been discussed in the last two sections, I will consider here only disputes between non-kin.

At least eight family disputes are ongoing in Inis Beag today, one of which has roots in events of a century ago (Another is supported by the exhortations of a ghost, as we shall see in the next chapter.). All are the result of past and present contests over the ownership and inheritance of land, and of past personality clashes which have led to violent argument and interference, especially physical violence, and have come to involve near cognates of the original enemies—"a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin." This type of factionalism gives rise mostly to gossip and the avoidance of one another by members of the contending families; only on rare occasions, usually at large social gatherings after much drink has been taken by the men, will disputants engage in face-to-face argument, which soon can provoke fighting between two and sometimes more persons. Fights are short-lived, inasmuch as other islanders, the headmaster, or the priest intervene to redress "the delicate balance of power . . . between the separate groups of kin." Legal suits over land ownership and inheritance have been many during the past three decades, and on several occasions guards have been summoned to Inis Beag by feuding families to investigate cases of physical violence and the destruction of property. Theft as a form of interference is practically unknown on the island. Economic conflict and the clash of personalities also underlie the dispute between the two shopkeepers, and gossip and withdrawal characterize their relationship, just as that between members of disputing families.

Since most of the folk in Inis Beag are related at least distantly, the term non-kin denotes both "those I have a relationship with" and those who are unrelated. Leyton finds that most non-kin disputes in Aughnaboy involve at least one person who has no effective kin; this situation does not exist in the island where everyone has effective kin. By far the greatest number of disputes between non-kin in Inis Beag occur between members of the same sex and involve men rather than

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women. They arise largely out of personality clashes and are expressed in gossip and withdrawal. As in Aughnaboy, none of the disputes between men appear to be based on competition for women, although jealousy of a rival and anger at being rejected have spurred a few disputes involving particular women and couples. One of the important causes of personality conflict in the island is the dogmatism of the folk. They are quick to form opinions, often on the basis of inadequate information, and cling tenaciously to them once they are voiced publicly. Thus, a simple difference of views concerning a topic between two persons can grow into a serious altercation lasting a lifetime—and beyond. One facet of this dogmatism is the local belief that the character of a person can be assessed accurately on first meeting him. I became the victim of a dispute of sorts by telling a man that my "first impressions" of a new acquaintance often are wrong, and that I prefer to interact for some time with the individual before passing judgment on him; this admittance branded me as deficient in character and one to be "withdrawn" from, and I never made it again.

I have mentioned that dependence on the guided interview can prevent an observer from gaining insight into disputes among Irish and Inis Beag peasants; this is so because dysfunctional social relations are kept carefully hidden from outsiders—the conscious models concerning disputes not only are incorporated into the self-image of the islanders but are urged on strangers. The concern for kin, acquaintances, and particular groups manifested in speech and behavior, which at times can be most sentimental, cannot be taken at face value. The emigrating relative whose departure provokes tears on the strand may be forgotten quickly, and his absence even heralded, in the privacy of the home, and the mourners at a graveside may include many who display indifference when thought to be unobserved while kneeling in the rear ranks. This state of affairs gives rise to a brief consideration of the problems associated with procuring reliable data.

Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously predicts the various reactions that her volume will stimulate in Irish readers She concludes with the following statement about the difficulties surrounding fact-finding in Ireland:

> This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I knew. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman . . . will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think; he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress . . . [He does not] reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went around and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake.

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and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves constantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments, hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first opportunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief. Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

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168 829 [522] government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 168 829 12 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under consideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 428 589 592 • [121] Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 168 581 [829] [162] The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

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women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

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are those who are either indifferent to the rapid increase in emigration since 1946, or welcome it. The island has its bitter critics, even among a few of the oldest generation who regret not having emigrated when they had the opportunity. A noted craftsman, long disillusioned with island existence, is refusing to train any of his sons to carry on the family tradition of generations. English is spoken as much as Irish in the presence of children in some households so as to prepare them for eventual emigration, in spite of the protestations of some priests and neighbors who insist that the alien tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds. The language revival movement receives much criticism because it results in emigrants being placed at a disadvantage; a frequently heard utterance in Inis Beag, even among those who hesitate to use English before their offspring, is, "What good will Irish do a person?" It is customary now for emigrating youths with inadequate command of English to spend three months to a year in a mainland community—with relatives or at a job—before going on to England or America. On the mainland, they also overcome some of their shyness and feelings of inferiority and become acquainted with Western customs absent from Inis Beag.

Islanders Abroad

My wife and I obtained some emigration statistics for the siblings of all folk now living in Inis Beag. For 289 persons who emigrated between 1891 and 1958, we assembled accurate data on: community settled in abroad, occupation, marriage age, place of origin and religion of spouse, and number of offspring. Of these 289, 4.8 percent went to neighboring islands, mostly to marry; 28.0 percent to the mainland (permanently rather than to prepare for emigration from Ireland); 42.8 percent to the United States; 22.8 percent to England; 1.0 percent to Australia; and 0.6 percent to Canada and other countries. The shift of emigration from the United States to England after the Second World War is revealed by the following statistics: between 1891 and 1945, 72.4 percent of Inis Beag emigrants went to the United States and only 10.6 percent to England; but between 1946 and 1958, emigration to the United States dropped to 25.5 percent, while to England it increased to 45.1 percent. The fact that before 1946 approximately 16 percent of the islanders who emigrated remained in Ireland as compared to 28 percent after that date attests to the increasing properity in their homeland as well as abroad.

It is beyond the scope of this work to follow Inis Beag emigrants of the past and present to their destinations abroad and beyond; the causes, conditions, and consequences of emigration from Ireland to America and England are amply documented in such standard works as Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger*, George W. Potter's *To the Golden Door*, William V. Shannon's *The American Irish*, Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and the American Emigration*, and John A. Jackson's *The Irish in Britain*. But, in closing chapter and book, I would like to discuss two additional sets of statistics which have an important bearing on Inis Beag culture and personality and which, as far as I know, have never been compiled systematically for any body of emigrants from a particular locality of Ireland. One

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set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage among those who have left the country.

Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus complex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread disaffection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle elsewhere, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones

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JOHN C. MESSENGER*

SEX AND REPRESSION IN AN IRISH FOLK COMMUNITY

In this chapter I will discuss sexual repression—its manifestations in behavior and beliefs, its causes, its inculcation, and its broader historical and cultural implications—in a small island community of the Gaeltacht that I will call Inis Beag.[1] My wife and I conducted ethnographic research there for nineteen months, between 1958 and 1966, which included a one-year stay and eight other visits of from one to seven weeks—at Christmas or during the summer. Ours is the only holistic ethnographic study of this community, although archeologists, linguists, philologists, folklorists, geographers, anthropometricians, and other scientists have undertaken research there for over a century. We collected a large body of culture and personality data on three other Irish islands for the purposes of making comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. Inis Beag is ideally suited to ethnographic and folklore research in that its population possesses a tradition which is less acculturated than that of any other local Irish group.

According to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960: 1–2), the islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect. The community has maintained its stability for at least 200 years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with

* A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled me to write this chapter.

[1] For other reports on Inis Beag, consult Messenger 1962, 1968, and 1969.

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[137] which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—
[361] of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which com-
[417] pose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

105 The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a
[205] "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the
[206] seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former
[871] coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which
[759] employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who
[288] resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the
[464] only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the
[502] narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies,
[793] passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island
at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less
177 cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due
178 to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has
505 had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the
[191] tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer
is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes,
[484] which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can dis-
cover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland
than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

17 The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in
[211] a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including
Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery
grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age prom-
ontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries,
stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house
built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that
the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[101] [2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important
[121] changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the intro-
duction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland,
and free secondary education.

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regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

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Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

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Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power,* says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

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their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

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govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation; more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble savages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neuroses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life, islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous announcement—often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag, especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case.

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk, they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning confessional materials.

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Austin Clarke, and Patrick Kavanaugh, and such younger ones as William Murray, John McGahern, Edna O'Brien, John Broderick, Brian Moore, and Benedict Kiely. Irish reviewers of the writings of the younger authors often criticize them for portraying an Ireland of the distant past. But, although conditions there are changing quite rapidly, sexual repression is still a force active enough to command the attention of creative artists and social scientists.* The subtle influences of nationalism, religion, and sexual puritanism were very apparent in the revisions suggested by most of the twenty-six "unbiased" scholars of Irish descent—in Ireland, England, and America—to whom I submitted the first version of this article for comment.

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* I am confident that one of the major "lines of attack" on my ethnography by Irish nativist reviewers will be that the community described is atypical and conditions in urbanized Ireland no longer bear any resemblance to those in Inis Beag. Since 1957, I have been much criticized by African elitists for describing in my writings a primitive culture which they claim is no longer characteristic of that developing continent.